Origin of Question

In high school, you are not taught how to read and spell, it is assumed you already know how to do that. That is a kindergarten through fifth-grade issue. If you haven’t learned how to read and spell by then, too bad, you are passed on to the next teacher and grade. However, we will make it up to the students by providing them with accommodations and modifications such as: test and quizzes read aloud, extended time and shortened assignments. This does not fix the reading and spelling problems, only a temporary cover-up to get them to pass the class. What these students need is an effective reading and spelling program that focuses on phonemic awareness.

As a special education teacher of a ninth through twelfth-grade cross-categorical classroom, I predominantly have students with the disability: cognitive delay (CD). My students are significantly below grade level in spelling and reading. Their Lexile scores ranged from the 200’s through the 800’s. By the ninth grade, their expected Lexile should be in the 1,000’s. Along with their low reading scores, I also notice the students’ lack of decoding skills. They’ve never acquired the right tools to be able to break words down into syllables and decode them, nor are they able to tell what sounds all of the phonemes make.

This will be my third year teaching in the cross-categorical classroom and for those three years I’ve been using the program, Orton Gillingham, which uses a multisensory approach to teach phonics. Traditionally, this programmed is used at the primary grade levels. With that being said, I want to find out in what ways is Orton Gillingham an effective reading and spelling program at teaching high school students with special needs, that are in my classroom?